Thomas Clay. 1773.

BY WAY OF PREVENTION,

A SLEEPY SERMON,

CALCULATED FOR THE DOG DAYS,

WITH

An Addreſs to the CLERGY, and another to the LAITY, of the CITY of LONDON, &c.

By the Reverend JAMES PENN,
Vicar of CLAVERING CUM LANGLEY, ESSEX.

To be had at his Houſe in Chriſt's Hoſpital; Mr. ALMON'S, in Piccadilly; Mr. WILKIE'S, St. Paul's Church-Yard; Mr. BLYTH'S, Royal Exchange; and Mr. BINGLEY'S, oppoſite Durham Yard, Strand. M,DCC,LXVII.

[Price Six-Pence.]

TO THE
CLERGY.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE ſultry Seaſon approaches, and the Congregation will be drowſy. Pray keep them awake. How? By Novelty, and Abſurdity. Succeſs is ſure. Look to the barking Dogs. Tickle their Ears, no matter for their Underſtanding. If your Hearers love Faith, preach it; if good Works, preach them. Do they want Grace? Let them have it plentifully. Be liberal in your Promiſes of heavenly Comforts, they coſt you nothing; by ſo doing you will ſecure to yourſelf earthly Comforts. Pleaſe the People, if you can, right, or wrong; your worldly Affairs will certainly proſper the better. Is this Orthodoxy? It will ſtarve you: Its Preachers are old Women. Bellow Nonſenſe, and you will be heard with Attention and Applauſe, nay more, well paid for it. But you ſhall forfeit your Reputation with the ſenſible Part of Mankind. They are few in Number. Praiſe is a poor Ordinary. You cannot live long upon Air. Beſides the Credit of your Profeſſion is concerned. Dry Morals and muſty Doctrines have turned Sermons into Wall Lectures; and thoſe, who do attend, are inclined rather

to ſlumber and ſleep, than to hear. Hell and Damnation rouſe and ſurpriſe the Congregation; and, when properly introduced, and emphatically expreſſed, will prevent even a Yawn. Thoſe two Words will acquire you the Character of godly and comfortable Preachers, if you ſhould fall ſhort of Inſpiration, and affect both the Hearts and Purſes of the People. The Mimickry and Buffoonery of a Stage Droll will help you much, they captivate prodigiouſly. Leave the dull, trite, and unedifying Subjects, *of doing as ye would be done by—of keeping holy the Sabbath Day*, &c. They are Subjects which the Multitude regard not, nor obſerve; being of the ſomniferous Kind. Suppoſe your Audience ſhould be inclined to doſe. What think ye of, *Awake, awake, Deborah; ariſe Barak.* If you perceive the pretty Gentlemen and the little Miſſes ogling, what if the Text ſhould be, *I have made a Covenant with my Eyes: Why then ſhould I look upon a Maid?* By Subjects of this Sort, adapted to the Behaviour of the Audience, you will draw the Eyes of the Congregation upon you: It is your Fault, if you do not keep their Attention fixed. By pleaſing their Imagination you may freely cenſure their Conduct, without Offence, and without Detriment. Let the Elders of the Congregation, and the rich Folks, bow, take Snuff, talk Politicks, loll,

yawn,

yawn, and ſnore, they have a right ſo to do: They come not to pray, *We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord*, having nothing to aſk for; nor to cry, *Good Lord deliver us*, having nothing to fear; but from a Regard to Decency, and to ſet a good Example to Inferiors. However be you ſerious, and diligent in your Profeſſion, then, if your Preaching ſhould be, like to the caſting Pearls before Swine, remember it to have been the Fate of your Maſter: You cannot have Pretenſions to greater Merit. Folly and Enthuſiaſm daily increaſe; the latter is profitable, the former, pleaſing. The utmoſt Exertion of your Abilities is required to ſtop their Progreſs: Otherwiſe, in a few Years, we ſhall have neither Virtue, nor Religion amongſt us. The Rich practiſe little of either, they are reſpectable without it. The middling People ape the Vices of their Superiors, and have a Taſte for Gaiety and Extravagance. The Poor cannot attend to ſpiritual Matters, their whole Time being taken up in providing themſelves with the bare Neceſſaries of Life, and keeping themſelves and Families from ſtarving. Excuſe the Freedom of this Addreſs from one, who is, with due Reſpect,

Your Brother and

Fellow Labourer,

July 21. JAMES PENN.

To

To the LAITY.

WORTHY SIRS,

THE Weather, I own, is hot and close, which, as you say, makes you heavy, and stupid. E'en go to Church: There, in a snug Corner of a Pew, you may take a refreshing Nap, which will enable you, with your Dames, after Somnus hath finished his Sermon, to amble to Islington, or Chelsea. You attribute your Drowsiness to the soft lulling Voice of the Preacher. What think ye *of Pudding* and *Porter*? Have they no Share in the Production? The Parson hath no Reason to complain, who eats at my Table. How dearly is the poor Morsel earnt by him, who is called in, like Sampson by the Philistines, to make you sport, if not to be insulted for his Poverty! Your Parson is dull. What is the Cause? The living, like a Gentleman, with the Stipend of a Porter. The Man hath little Spirits to preach, who hath an empty Purse. Pity, which you are ever ready to bestow, will not maintain his Family. The inferior Clergy dare not mention their Distress. You would, we fear, contemn, not relieve, them. They appear, what they are not, lest you should despise them, for being, what they really are; poor. Hypocrisy is in this Case a Virtue. It is their Sin, who oblige them to wear a Mask.

Be

Be more generous in your Subſcriptions, and Preſents, this will make their Sermons to be more lively, and ſpirited. Is it too much to ſacrifice a Night at Vauxhall? Is it too great ſelf Denial to forego a Syllabub at the White Conduit? Let your Generoſity be according to your Wealth and Station. It would be mean in a Knight, or Alderman, to give leſs, than Gold, it wants an Epithet, if he ſhould give Copper: More is not expected from a Chandler's Shop. When Popery was the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity in this Iſland, the Laity was never without two or three Prieſts at their Table; now the Profeſſion is changed for the better, the People's Hoſpitality is worſe, inſtead of two or three *daily*, a *ſingle Prieſt hardly* gains Admittance to their Table *once in a Twelvemonth.* The Parſon hath a prodigious Appetite. Why do you keep him hungry? It is a Reflection upon the Oeconomy of you Laity to permit, by your Encouragement, Horſe-Jockeys, Italian Figures, Rope-Dancers, and Ballad-Singers, to acquire Fortunes and Eſtates, and to ſuffer Perſons of approved Merit, Learning, and Character, [whoſe whole Time and Study are engaged in the Work of your Salvation,] to languiſh out a miſerable Life, upon the ſcanty Income of forty or fifty Pounds a Year, and to leave their Children needy and unwelcome Dependents on churliſh

Relations,

Relations, or to be ſupported, like Beggars Brats, by public Charity. It is Time to cloſe the Addreſs, which grows too ſerious. Wiſhing you, Gentlemen, more Generoſity, and the Clergy leſs need of it,

I remain, ſleeping or waking,

Your obedient Servant,

July 21. JAMES PENN.

ACTS.

ACTS. Chap. xx. Verſe 9.

" And there ſat in a Window a
" certain young Man, named
" Eutychus, being fallen into
" a deep Sleep; and as Paul
" was long Preaching he ſunk
" down with Sleep, and fell
" down from the third Loft,
" and was taken up dead.

THE Sect of Eutychians hath prodigiouſly increaſed, ſince the Days of St Paul; though its Admirers and Friends have greatly deviated from the Conduct of the Founder. This Eutychus we find to have fallen aſleep, after the Apoſtle had been long preaching, but his Followers go to ſleep, before the Preacher hath begun to preach, even ſometimes before the Text is mentioned:

He went to ſleep at a Time, being Midnight, when Nature requires reſt, but they, when Nature requires them to be awake. If theſe modern Sleepers, with whom it is ſo difficult to keep their eyes open one ſingle Hour, had lived in the early Ages of Chriſtianity, or no longer back than the laſt Century, when Prolixity, from the general Practice, was accounted an Excellency, they would have been quite Sick of Religion; would have renounced their Faith, rather than have loſt their Nap, or have fallen into ſuch a deep Sleep, that there muſt of Neceſſity have been a Miracle to have awaked them.

It is ſurpriſing, when the Service of Religion is ſo ſhort, barely decent, containing nothing, either in its Ceremonies, Matter, or Performance, tedious, fatiguing, or irkſome, and therefore well deſigned to prevent Drowſineſs, there ſhould be any one the leaſt inclined to ſlumber. But Sleep ſeems to have taken up her Re-

ſidence

ſidence in theſe Houſes of Prayer, and a Perſon, who, at any other Time, or Place, would highly reſent the Appellation of dull, heavy, and ſtupid, accounts it no Reflection, nor Shame, actually to appear ſo here.

The Practice being general, may be conſidered as a ſufficient Excuſe for the Folly. In the Opinion of the World it may, but when weighed in the divine Scale, it will be found wanting. To ſhew the Impropriety and Abſurdity of ſuch Behaviour, let me aſk, Would it not be both an Indecency and Indignity for a Subject to preſent his Petition to his Sovereign with his Eyes ſhut, or ſolicit his Prince's Favour with a Yawn? And is it not the higheſt Indecency and Indignity, inſtead of being looked upon to be no Offence, thus to addreſs the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? Shall a Man not dare to intrude into the Preſence of an earthly Monarch in ſuch a rude and inſolent Manner, and ſhall it

be deemed no Crime ſo to behave before the Majeſty of Heaven.

For what Intent, or Purpoſe, do we enter into this ſacred Place? Is it not, as in Duty and Gratitude bound, to praiſe God for paſt, and to pray to him for, future Bleſſings? But can our Gratitude be expreſſed, or our Wants made known, when our Eyes are cloſed, and Sleep hath rendered us dull of Hearing? No one could be thus profane, unleſs the Infirmities of Age, or any natural Diſorder, prevented, or obſtructed, a fixed Attention, if he was thoroughly ſatisfied of God's immediate Preſence in this Place; and that his Actions, whatever they are, and practiſed in the moſt ſecret Manner, cannot be unknown to, nor concealed from, him. And whoever comes here, muſt believe the Deity to be both omniſcient and omnipreſent; otherwiſe his religious Service is, like to that of the Worſhippers of Baal, ridiculous and abſurd,

Why ſhould he pray to a God, who cannot hear him? Is it reaſonable to invoke him for Aid and Aſſiſtance, who, as he heareth not, cannot afford any Relief, nor adminiſter any Help? Why ſhould he offer up Praiſes and Thankſgivings to one, who cannot be of the leaſt Benefit, or Prejudice, to him; can neither reward him, if pious, nor puniſh him, if irreligious. Unleſs therefore it is allowed, that God ſees, knows, and ſurveys all Things, no Reaſon can be aſſigned, either for the Expediency, or the Neceſſity of Devotion.

A God, whoſe Powers are thus limited and confined to know nothing of the Affairs of this World, nor to note the Tranſactions of Mankind, muſt be an uſeleſs Being. Like the God of Epicurus, who, though he allowed his Exiſtence, by depriving him of the Government and Management of the World, as unworthy of his Concern, ſubverted the Foundation of Religion.

For,

For, unleſs God can govern as well as create, can do Good, or inflict Evil, in this Life, we know not how it will be poſſible to perſuade Men to worſhip him, even to allow his Exiſtence. Atheiſm itſelf may be juſtified upon this Principle. The Abſurdity ſeems to be nearly equal of him, who denies a God, and of him, who, allowing his Exiſtence, denies him the Power of Acting.

If then we acknowledge the Exiſtence of a God, allow the Powers he hath to be unlimited, and not to be controuled; that he is not confined to Time, nor Place, but his Preſence filleth all Things, the Indecency complained of muſt aſtoniſh. But we muſt be more aſtoniſhed, that any Plea ſhould be offered to excuſe it. A weak and frivolous one no doubt, for none other can be offered; yet ſuch as it is, thoſe, who are blameable, acquieſce in, with ſeeming Complacency and Satisfaction, we wiſh that we could add, with a ſafe and eaſy Con-

ſcience,

ſcience. We ſhall conſider in this Diſcourſe.

FIRST.

The Plea offered to excuſe this Indecency.

SECONDLY.

Offer ſome Reaſons againſt committing it.

FIRST; Of the Plea offered to excuſe this Indecency.

The principal Plea, and commonly urged, is, The Dulneſs and Heavineſs of the Preacher, who delivers himſelf in ſuch a ſpiritleſs, ſoporiferous Manner, that it is impoſſible to keep the Attention of the Hearer awake. Are his Hearers always attentive? Are they not ſometimes a little too indolent? But there is neither Grace, Dignity, nor Action, in his Manner: A mere Statue. Have all Men the Power of ſpeaking? Is this the only Profeſſion chargeable with this Defect? Are all born to be eloquent? Muſt all be Orators?

No

No more to be expected, than that all their Hearers ſhould be alike, and equally, ſenſible, and diſcerning.

Different Talents are requiſite for the Work of the Miniſtry. It is the Province of ſome to affect the Paſſions, of others to convince the underſtanding. If all have not the Wiſdom of St. Paul, or the Eloquence of Apollos, they may be as honeſt and ſincere as either Paul, or Apollos; And Honeſty and Sincerity ſufficiently anſwer for every other Defect. The Language of the Heart is the moſt excellent Preaching, and a good Life the beſt Sermon.

If the People come with a Diſpoſition to hear, [and if they do not, wherefore come they at all?] there is no doubt of their being edified. When Devotion is performed, not from Cuſtom, but as a Duty, little Offence will be taken at the Preacher: Something will be afforded to pleaſe, and profit with. But too many,

we

we fear, vlſit theſe Places for Entertainment, not Improvement, rather to amuſe themſelves for an Hour, than to ſerve God. Such Perſons muſt be diſappointed, becauſe our Churches, we are of Opinion, ſhould be looked upon as Houſes of Prayer, not Playhouſes. Humour in the one, and Preaching in the other, are equally abſurd, and ridiculous: The one an Inſult on common ſenſe, the other on Religion. How unaccountable the Folly of thoſe Men, who ſay the Preacher is dull, when they themſelves are aſleep. Somewhat like to the fooliſh dreaming of the Soldiers, the Guard of Chriſt's Sepulchre, who aſſerted, that his Diſciples ſtole his Body away, and, to prove it, very modeſtly aſſerted, that they, at the Inſtant of Time it was done, were faſt aſleep.

Many of thoſe who are kept awake by the Manner of the Preacher, are apt to forget the Matter, whoſe Words, like to a ſudden Clap of Thunder, are apt to ſurpriſe and affect the Senſes, but make not

the leaſt Impreſſion on the Underſtanding: Or, like to the Ægyptian Storm, which, whilſt it laſted, had an Effect upon Pharaoh, but it no ſooner ceaſed, than he forgot what Moſes and Aaron had ſaid, and the Promiſe he had made them.

The pleaſing popular Harangues have more of Subtlety, than good Senſe; more of worldly Craft, than Religion; more of Oſtentation, than Goodneſs. They have been the Cauſe of many Schiſms and Diviſions in the Church of Chriſt, and the Means of propagating ſtrange Doctrines and Opinions, to the great Diſturbance of the good Order and Peace of Society, and the diſquieting of the Mind of the honeſt, but weak, Chriſtian. We cannot, as yet, have forgot the Miſchiefs and Diſorders of the laſt Century.

But, ſaith the pious Chriſtian, the Diſcourſe is too ſhort.—The Man of Pleaſure, too long—the Man of Senſe, too tedious. In anſwer to the pious Chriſtian

we

we would obſerve, that much be ſaid in a little Time—To the Man of Pleaſure, that any Thing ſaid is too much for him to hear—To the Man of Senſe, that Repetitions are ſometimes neceſſary for the Inſtruction of the Weak and Ignorant. The doctrinal Points of Religion require an Explanation, and, we apprehend, that upon Subjects of ſuch Importance, as the Redemption, Chriſt's Satisfaction, and a future State, the Preacher could not dwell too long, nor the Audience hear too much. Nothing of this ſort can be an Offence to the Man of real Piety, and others, we think, have no Right to complain.

Spiritual Subjects are neither pleaſing, nor acceptable, to the carnal Mind. The Man of corrupt Principles, or bad Morals, hath no Pretentions to the Benefits of Chriſt's Merits; ſuch Diſcourſes, therefore, whilſt he continues unreformed, muſt be received with Diſguſt. Let a Man be ſeriouſly diſpoſed, and he will with Pleaſure, not Diſtaſte, attend to what-

ever is here ſaid, no Matter who ſays it. A Diſcourſe upon Temperance muſt be received with Diſlike by the Voluptuary. As little pleaſing to talk of Sobriety before the Drunkard; of Generoſity, to a Miſer; of the Love of God, to the worldly minded.

If you examined yourſelves thoroughly, you would find that your Inattention and Complaints ariſe from a bad Diſpoſition in yourſelves, and that you neither continue here, nor depart from hence, with any Sort of Satisfaction, becauſe you come with unclean Hands, and impure Hearts. How can ye, when evil, think good? What Fruit can be had from Seed ſown on ſtony ground? Can we expect the Deaf to hear? No more can it be expected, that they ſhould liſten to the Voice of Truth, however charming, who, by their wicked and abandoned Lives, diſhonour, and oppoſe it. Corn will not grow without proper Culture. What Man ſo abſurd to attempt the Building of an Houſe without laying a Foundation? What Effect

fect then can Religion have on the Minds of thoſe, who do not, by a good Life and ſober Converſation, prepare themſelves to receive it? Unleſs there is a willing Mind, no Improvement can be made.

Can every Excellency be found in one Man? Neither will every Miniſter pleaſe all. Every one thinks, and likes, differently. Approbation, or Diſapprobation, is more frequently the Effect of Humour and Prejudice, than of good Senſe, and a ſound Judgment. Preachers have been ſometimes applauded, and even their Defects praiſed, ſo ſtrangely whimſical their Hearers, when they deſerved Contempt. Elſe Noiſe and Nonſenſe could not have been taken, neither in this, nor the laſt Century, for Zeal and Religion. Lives the Man ſo happy to acquire univerſal Approbation? He is not to be found; not even amongſt the inſpired Penmen. The Speech of St. Paul, though his Writings were moſt excellent, was deemed contemptible. Chriſt himſelf, though no

Man

Man ever ſpake, as he ſpake, no Man ever did, as he did, had but few Followers; and the Multitude, who heard him gladly, joined with the Prieſts, in their Addreſs to Pilate, to put him to Death. If an Apoſtle, even our Saviour himſelf, was treated with Contempt and Neglect, it cannot ſurpriſe, that thoſe, who have not their Powers, nor Abilities, ſhould not be attended to, nor regarded.

But ſome of our Sleepers will ſay, that the Miniſter himſelf would be little pleaſed with the Service, if it was not his Duty to perform it. Is it not commendable in him to do his Duty? Is it commendable in them to neglect theirs? If he performs his Office with any ſecret Diſlike, to his own Maſter, who alone knoweth the ſecrets of his Heart, he ſtandeth, or falleth: They are not to judge him. It would not be amiſs, if they followed his Example, and appeared outward, what they are not inwardly, devout. Some perſons might then be profited by the Example, though

though they themſelves would receive no Benefit. Let not theſe Perſons, however, think to excuſe, or palliate, their own Faults, by paſſing a ſevere Cenſure upon another's Piety. For, ſuppoſing their Cenſure to be juſt, his Neglect cannot excuſe theirs. Every Man will by his own Actions be juſtified, or condemned, hereafter.

It is Time to have done with this ſhameful Plea againſt the officiating Miniſter, referring theſe religious Drones to the Example of the induſtrious Bee, which collects her Honey from every Flower, and extracts ſome ſweet from the moſt unpleaſant, and unſavoury. Let them therefore keep there Eyes open, and be attentive, when preſent, and we doubt not of their Hearing, at all Times, of ſomething, even from the moſt dull and heavy Preacher, that will be of ſome Uſe and Benefit to them in the Way of Salvation.

Let

Let them, however, take care not to impoſe upon themſelves, but candidly enquire into the real Cauſes of this Drowſineſs. Then they may ſee Reaſons for cenſuring themſelves, and excuſing the Preacher. May they not have been greatly tired with Buſineſs, over-fatigued with Pleaſure, or ſurfeited with too much eating and drinking? Their Spirits being thus exhauſted, they are naturally inclined, like brute Beaſts, to ſlumber and ſleep, and are abſolutely unfit to appear, not in the Church, but any where, with Propriety. Let the Cauſe be what it will, they have Houſes to ſleep in. Their Appearance here is only the Maſk of Piety, which, though it may ſave their Credit, too much the Religion of the Age, betrays a Want of Senſe. To be decent therefore, let them Sleep at Home; or, not to be reputed Fools, let them keep awake, when here. Such Behaviour, we fear, will not only be found fooliſh, but wicked, when we conſider,

SECONDLY.

The Reaſons to be offered againſt committing this Indecency.

FIRST.

FIRST.

Let it be ever remembered, that this Place is honoured with the divine Preſence. How dreadful then is this Place! With what Awe ſhould we approach, with what Reverence behave, when in it. If an indecent and looſe Behaviour, even amongſt Equals, ſhall be deemed a Breach of good Manners, and a Want of Senſe, what ſhall we ſay of ſuch Behaviour, when in the Preſence of a Superior at ſuch an infinite Diſtance from the higheſt of Mortal Men? It is ſo infamous to want a Name. Is Ridicule to be accounted Religion; Laughter, Piety; Drowſineſs, Devotion? Do not the various Bleſſings received from Heaven, demand the Exertion of all our Powers to expreſs our Gratitude? Can any Words, or Actions, ſufficiently diſplay the Praiſes of ſo gracious a Benefactor? Muſt we not then be aſtoniſhed to obſerve the Lukewarmneſs and Indolence of many in their Devotions? whoſe Behaviour is ſuch, that they ſeem to come to receive, rather than to pay, Homage.

When aſſembled in a public and ſolemn Manner, in Places peculiarly ſet apart for ſacred Purpoſes, to offer up our Addreſſes

to Heaven, can we be thought ſerious, if we appear in the leaſt trifling? Should not our religious Service be performed with the greateſt Caution and Circumſpection, leſt we ſhould do any Thing, that might be an Offence to, or reflect Diſhonour upon, the Majeſty of Heaven, before whom we ſtand? Muſt we not bluſh, when we reflect upon our irreverent Behaviour, and tremble, when we think of the Dignity and Excellency of the Perſon, whom by that means we have inſulted? Can we deſerve Good at the Hands of God, if we ſlight his Worſhip, or profane his Service? May we not juſtly fear the Severity of his Anger for acting ſo unſeemly in his ſight? Can we call it Piety, ſay we not right, that ſuch Unſeemlineſs is a Mockery, a Deriſion of God? Somewhat ſimilar to the rude Multitude, who ſhew their Thankfulneſs for public Bleſſings in Acts of Riot and Intemperance. Keep we back from the Sanctuary of the Lord, this Holy of Holies, unleſs we can be ſincere in our Devotion. Perform we not our Service with unhallowed Lips. Come we not with unclean Hands, and impure Hearts: For here ſits the Almighty, who cannot be impoſed upon, nor deceived,

who,

who, as he ſeeth, will puniſh the Hypocriſy. Let our Attention be fixed upon the Object of our Adoration; our Deportment, grave and ſerious; our Service, pious and devout; that we may not offer the Sacrifice of Fools, and Curſings, inſtead of Bleſſings, be the Reſult of our Prayers.

SECONDLY.

Let it be remembered, that one Cauſe of our Meeting here is, to expreſs our Gratitude to the Almighty for thoſe his gracious Acts of creating, preſerving, and redeeming us. Subjects theſe which deſerve eternal Songs of Praiſe: Bleſſings, which demand continual Thankſgivings from us. Can any one be backward, or remiſs, when called upon, to celebrate ſuch extraordinary Goodneſs? Was our Being the free Will of God? Doth our Support in it depend on his Providence? Is it through him that our Guilt is cancelled, and eternal Life offered to us? Is he the ſole Author and bounteous Giver of all that we have, or poſſeſs? Is there any good Thing, which may contribute to our Eaſe and Comfort, withheld from us? Are we forbidden, or deprived of any Enjoyment, unleſs the Enjoyment is hurtful? What remains to be created, either to pleaſe

the Senſes, or to gratify the Appetites, which hath not already been created for our Uſe? Doth not our Happineſs, both here and hereafter, proceed from him?

When we think on theſe Things, are Exhortations neceſſary to awaken our Gratitude to ſuch a Being? Should we not readily embrace every Opportunity of expreſſing our Thankfulneſs to him? How glad ſhould we be, like to the Pſalmiſt of old, to enter into the Houſe of the Lord, and to celebrate his Praiſes with joyful Lips. It is impoſſible for the Man, who hath a true Senſe of the Goodneſs of God towards him, in the ſingular Bleſſings he hath vouchſafed him, to profane his Sabbath, either by abſenting from its Service, or an indecent Performance of it. He cannot have that Senſe, who doth; by which Behaviour he ſhews himſelf to be unworthy of what he hath received, and juſtly ſecludes himſelf from any future Favours.

Can he expect the Labour of his Hands to proſper, who refuſes to pay his Acknowledgment to him, who firſt gave him Power to act, and who can render his Deſigns abortive, or ſucceſsful? There is

is no one, however rich and powerful, but ſtands in Need of his Aſſiſtance, either to procure what he hath, or to ſecure to him the quiet Poſſeſſion of it. What Man ſo wealthy, whom Accidents and Misfortunes cannot reduce, and impoveriſh? What Man ſo powerful, whom Envy and Malice cannot pull down, and deſtroy? Such Events Hiſtory furniſhes us with, and ſuch fatal Ends have they deſerved, who, relying upon their Riches and Grandeur, took not God for their Strength, but ſerved and reverenced the Creature more, than the Creator. Hence, let us learn, that if Gratitude cannot prevail with us, it is for our Intereſt, to worſhip God in Sincerity and Truth.

LASTLY.

Another Cauſe of aſſembling ourſelves is, to ſolicit the Pardon of our Sins. A Matter of the moſt intereſting Conſequence to every Man, becauſe every Man wants it, and without it, no Man whatever can be ſaved. What Succeſs, think ye, can attend the Petition, when our Behaviour is indecent, our Devotion inſincere? What Mercy can Heaven beſtow upon ſuch Worſhippers, who, inſtead of being fervent in

Prayer,

Prayer, are heavy to ſlumber; preſent in Body, but abſent in Spirit.

If God graciouſly condeſcends to hear, ought not we to pray? If he will grant, ſhould not we let our Requeſts be made known to him? If we aſk not, or aſk amiſs, can we expect to receive, what we aſk for? Do we merit Forgiveneſs of Sin, unleſs we ſolicit for it? And do we purſue the right Method of obtaining it, when inſtead of uſing the utmoſt Earneſtneſs in our Prayers to the Almighty, we ſuffer our Thoughts to wander, and our Attention to be overpowered with Sleep? Is our eternal Welfare of ſo little concern to us? Is it of no Moment, whether we are happy, or miſerable hereafter? How aſſiduous and diligent are we in Matters reſpecting our temporal Intereſt. And is Eternity a trifling Conſideration? In our ſerious Hours we muſt be of a different Opinion. Can we think that Behaviour, not allowable from a Subject to his Prince,—from a Son, to his Father,—from a Servant, to his Maſter,—will be acceptable to God? Or, that what would incur the Diſpleaſure of any of them, can procure even the leaſt Favour from him? Forgiveneſs of

Sin

Sin is not a ſmall Requeſt; not to be obtained by a Neglect of ſacred Worſhip, or an irreverent Performance of it, but by frequent and fervent Supplications: Without which, what we imagine to be our Juſtification, will prove our Condemnation; and our Sins, inſtead of being pardoned, will riſe up in Judgment againſt us.

TO CONCLUDE.

If what hath been offered, cannot prevail with our pious Sleepers to keep awake, they muſt even ſleep on, and take their Reſt. However, as they know not at what Hour their Lord will come, or what the Time of their Viſitation will be, it would, we think, be better for them to be found rather watching, than napping; leſt that Day ſhould come upon them unawares, and, like the ſleeping Virgins in the Goſpel, when the Bridegroom ſhall appear, and call them, they ſhould not be ready to meet him. But be ye always ready; ever remembering that Caution of our Saviour given to his Diſciples, and alſo to us, To watch and pray, leſt we enter into Temptation. Whilſt Men Sleep, the Enemy is awake. Drowſineſs affords him

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an Opportunity of ſowing his Tares with Succeſs. Inattention, in hearing the Word of God, generally produces a Coolneſs for ſacred Worſhip, which terminates in Licentiouſneſs, and a total Diſregard for Religion.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be given Praiſe and Adoration.

FINIS.

In a few Days will be publiſhed,

A SERMON

ON THE

EVIL OF RICHES,

WITH

A DEDICATION:

By the AUTHOR of the Above.